
January 1977 Number 54



January 1977, Number 54

The Delius Society
Full Membership £3.00 per year
Students £1.50

Subscription to Libraries (Journal only) £2.00 per year

President

Eric Fenby OBE, Hon RAM

Vice Presidents

The Rt Hon Lord Boothby KBE, LLD

Felix Aprahamian

Roland Gibson M Sc, Ph D (Founder Member)

Sir Charles Groves CBE

Stanford Robinson OBE, ARCM (Hon), Hon CSM

Meredith Davies MA, B Mus, FRCM, Hon RAM

Chairman

R B Meadows

5 Westbourne House, Mount Park Road, Harrow, Middlesex

Treasurer

G H Parfitt

31 Lynwood Grove, Orpington, Kent BR6 0BD

Secretary

J K White

16 Slade Close, Walderslade, Chatham, Kent

Editor

Christopher Redwood

4 Tabor Grove, London SW19 4EB

Telephone: 01-946 5952

*The Delius Society
Journal*

Contents

Editorial	3
Delius slept Here? by G. G. Hoare	5
Rudolf Kempe: a Personal Recollection by Eric Fenby	10
Deryck Cooke: a Personal Tribute by R. O. Wright	12
Delius Society Meetings	17
Forthcoming Events	19

Cover Illustration

F Delius by Dawn Redwood (after Kapp)
 Published quarterly, in January, April, July and October
 Additional copies of this issue 50p each, inclusive of postage
 ISSN - 0306 - 0373

EDITORIAL

The article "Grez-sur-Loing, 1932" (Journal No. 52) aroused a good deal of interest. Several members praised the hitherto unpublished photographs and the quality of their reproduction. Fräulein Gerhardi, however, has pointed out that I was a little over-gallant in describing her as a girl of seventeen when she stayed with Delius. In fact she celebrated her twenty-third birthday whilst at Grez. Her letter goes on to say that the entire German membership of the Delius Society met at the home of her sister, Frau Malwe Steinweg, at Ludenscheid in July. Herr and Frau Dieterling travelled from Cologne and Frau Baum from Wuppertal. Herr Dieterling brought his tape-recorder and the gathering listened to the music of Delius while eating home-made cake and ice-cream on the verandah.

* * *

Still in Germany, the November 1976 issue of the Boosey & Hawkes GmbH house magazine was largely devoted to Delius. It opened with a translation of the section on the composer from Sir Thomas Beecham's autobiography "A Mingled Chime", and followed it with part of the article "Delius and Strindberg" by Christopher Redwood.

* * *

Mr. E. Marshall Johnson, whose recollections of Grez were also featured in "Grez-sur-Loing, 1932" has since become a member of the Society. Living as he does in a quiet corner of rural Oxfordshire, he is an enthusiastic supporter of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England, and he has sent me details of a film it has recently produced entitled "Beautiful Britain". It lasts for 1hr. 20 mins. and the background music opens with Delius's "Florida" Suite. Also included is Vaughan Williams' arrangement of "Greensleeves" and the slow movement of the 5th Symphony, Elgar's "Serenade for Strings", and Sibelius's "King Christian II" Suite and the finale of the 1st Symphony.

* * *

It was pleasing to hear the BBC not only advertising Sir Charles Groves' concert with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra on 9th November, but actually playing an excerpt from "Appalachia" immediately before the six o'clock news. Unfortunately their treatment of the actual concert was not so praiseworthy; I spent the first few minutes turning up the volume in order to be able to hear anything at all, only to have my eardrums shattered by the applause at the end. The rather slow tempi in "Appalachia" revealed some details that are not always heard, but Delius's much divided string parts sounded mushy and there was some very poor intonation in the variation for divided

'cellos. Incidentally, if I gave the impression in my last Editorial that all the Delius in the present season is happening in the north-west, let me draw attention to a performance of "Brigg Fair" at the Festival Hall in July. The conductor, one need hardly say, is again our Vice President, Sir Charles Groves. "Forthcoming Events" (p.19) also quotes the price reductions for parties mentioned in the Hallé Concerts prospectus. If there are 10 or more members interested in travelling to Manchester for "A Mass of Life" on 20th February, I will make a block booking. London members may like to know that a train leaves Manchester Victoria at 10.32 pm., arriving at Euston at 2.28 am. Sleepers are also available, allowing you to lie in until 7.30 am.! Please let me know before the end of January, stating the price you would be prepared to pay, but not enclosing any money.

* * *

The first of the Beecham boxed sets of records appeared in November, and contains the following:

- Side 1 "Paris" and "Summer Night on the River".
- " 2 "Sea Drift" and the "Irmelin" Prelude.
- " 3 "Fennimore and Gerda" Intermezzo and "Appalachia" (part 1).
- " 4 "Appalachia" (part 2), "La Calinda" ("Florida" Suite version - previously unissued), "La Calinda" and Closing Scene from "Koanga".
- " 5 "Eventyr" and "Over the Hills and Far Away".
- " 6 "In a Summer Garden", Intermezzo and Serenade, Un-accompanied Chorus (previously unissued) and Closing Scene from "Hassan".
- " 7 "Brigg Fair" (recorded 1928), "On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring", and "The Walk to the Paradise Garden".
- " 8 Eleven songs sung by Dora Labette.
- " 9 Songs by Dora Labette and Heddle Nash, and Beecham's television interview with Edmund Tracy.
- " 10 Beecham's 1951 radio talk on "A Mass of Life" including previously unissued recordings of the Prelude to Part 2 (RPO) and to Part 2 No. 3 (LPO).

The box also contains the paperback reissue of Beecham's biography of Delius (on sale separately at £3). The package is priced at £9.95, which works out at £1.39 per disc. It can, however, be obtained more cheaply than this, the lowest price I have so far seen being £7.50 from Music Discount Centre, 67 Park Road, London NW1. If you collect it personally this comes to only 90p a record, a bargain indeed! The same firm is also offering the new recording of "Fennimore and Gerda" at £5.45. If ordering by post, please note that there is a standard postal charge of 60p, irrespective of the number of records involved.



DELIUS SLEPT HERE?

As a young man Delius made a visit to the town of Stroud in Gloucestershire. Geoffrey G. Hoare has recently investigated what was previously an almost complete blank in the composer's fascinating life history.

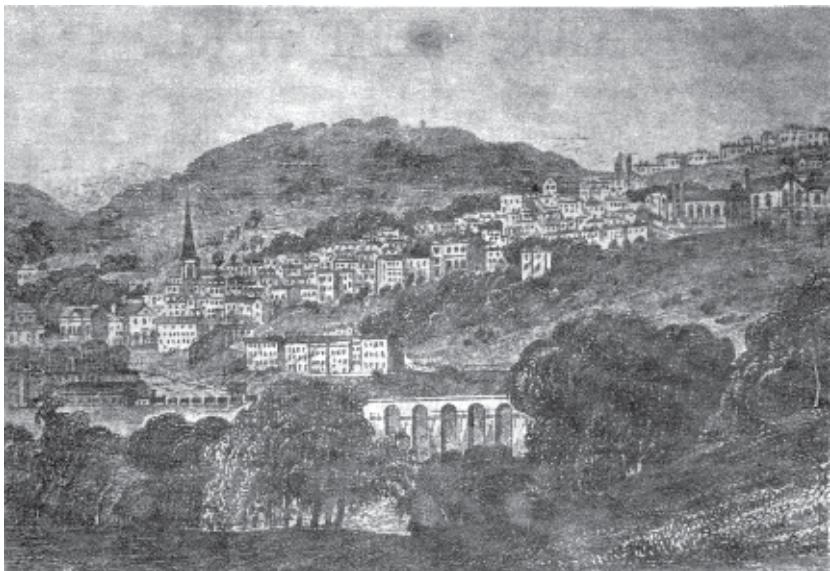
Reprinted from "Cotswold Life", March 1976, by courtesy of the publishers of English Country Magazines.

BACON REFERRED TO ANTIQUITIES or remnants of history being likened to Pictures of a Wreck in which industrious persons by an exact and scrupulous diligence and observation, out of monuments, names, words, traditions, private records, and evidences, fragments of stories, passages of books that concern not story and the like, do save and recover something from the deluge of time. . . .

Many a Historian, Delver-into-the-past, or even Pedigree Hunter since the above was written, must, at the end of a long exhausting investigation, have likened him or herself to a Picture of a Wreck! Today, one can add newspapers, periodicals, telephones, radio and T.V. to Bacon's sources of help or inspiration. Of prime importance in the uncovering of any story from the past, is—if one is lucky and they can be traced—the descendants and their friends.

For the countless numbers who read of, apart from listening to, the music of the English-born composer Frederick Delius, there was more than one gap in that composer's fascinating life-story. One requiring investigation was recently laid at my door and concerned his lengthy visit to the town of Stroud in the Autumn of 1881.

It was not generally known that a Mr. Sucksmith, the manager of the firm Julius Delius & Co., Wool & Noil Merchants of East Parade, Bradford, was responsible for suggesting that the 19 year old Delius son—who had reluctantly been pushed into the family business earlier that year—would be better employed as a travelling agent for the firm, rather than to stay indefinitely as a ledger-clerk. It was further suggested as heir-apparent to this then flourishing Yorkshire business, and with his flair for social affability, that he would surely be welcome anywhere. Why not send him to Stroud in Gloucestershire, to learn this side of the business, from their very good agent in that town? It was this same Mr. Sucksmith in Bradford who frequently had to hide Fritz—as he was then called—among the wool bales, to avoid his Father's wrath! This was after the son's visit to Stroud had been so successful—a similar trip, but this time to Chemnitz in Germany, had followed; Fritz had then returned to head-office at Bradford, and announced that he wished to take up music, not wool, as a career. Father and son were often not on speaking terms for weeks on end, until the final break came.



Distant view of Stroud in the 1880's from Rodborough Fields, as Delius would have seen it, subject to artist's licence! (The G.W.R. brick built viaduct in the foreground dates from 1872, and replaced a wooden viaduct which had carried Brunel's Broad Gauge tracks for 27 years previously.

Courtesy : John Stephens.

According to the late Sir Thomas Beecham, young Delius was accepted as a social acquisition to the comparatively 'unexciting' community of Stroud. The district was much to his liking with the softer character of the Cotswolds contrasting favourably to Rhombalds and Ilkley moors, his nearest areas of escape from Bradford. There were fleeting references in correspondence to visits he had made to Gloucester, Cirencester, and Bath – all so different from the Yorkshire mill town of his birth, that he hated so much. One brief account of the Stroud visit mentioned that he kept his hotel expenses, for several nights out in London, at concerts and the opera. If such was the case he had obviously been provided with alternative and cheaper accommodation elsewhere. The logical conclusion would have been to stay at the agent's house. Alan Jefferson's book on Delius, first published in 1974 mentioned briefly, and I think for the first time in print, that Dolius stayed in Stroud "with a family called Baxter", the head of a local woollen mill. Having connections with local woollen mills might have saved the ever helpful editorial section of *The Stroud News & Journal's* time in trying to trace for me, without success, the 'head', of a Stroud mill, named Baxter. From their archives they referred me to Fort William, high above Stroud, close by the famous Rodborough

Fort that is still a feature of Stroud's south-western skyline. They had traced a Daniel Baxter living there in 1881. The fact that he was referred to specifically as 'a commission agent' was rather off-putting, but if an agent on commission handling raw material from Delius & Co. of Bradford, for the Stroud valley mills. I felt I could be on the right track.



"FORT WILLIAM" above Stroud, Glos.

Dating from the 1880's this previously unpublished photograph of Daniel Baxter's house was copied recently by the author. The property is now owned by Rudolf Sauter, the artist nephew of John Galsworthy.

"Fort William" is no fort and has no known ties with Scotland – it is believed to have been named thus by a previous owner who had Anglo Indian army connections.

The Deeds of Fort William, now occupied by my friend and John Galsworthy's nephew the poet, playwright and artist Rudolf Sauter, strengthened my findings when I learnt that the house was conveyed to a Daniel Baxter in 1880 by Holloway & Sons, Woollen Merchants, who had owned the property from the year 1855. Daniel was to live there for 36 years. I could have closed down on this and presented it as a 'fait accompli', for an old Bradford paper in my possession referred to Delius being sent to "an agent in the West Country". But then, following a second letter of general enquiry in the Stroud paper, there came by

telephone and letter evidence of a nearly 60 year Baxter occupation ending in 1927, of a large house on the Cainscross Road, Stroud. The claim here was that the house, then Downfield Villa, now an hotel, was but a good stone's throw from the famous, still existent, Lodgemoor &



Downfield Villa, now a hotel in Cainscross Road, Stroud. From 1873 until 1927 it was continuously in the ownership of a family called Baxter. Author's photograph.

Frome Hall Mills, of Strachan & Co. Ltd., the woollen cloth Manufacturers. I was even told that a Mr. John Baxter was Delius's host during his stay in Stroud. But Downfield Villa in 1881 had been occupied and owned since 1873 by one Alfred Baxter. He also purchased land opposite in 1888 and again in 1889. He was described as a hop merchant. When Alfred Baxter died in October 1897, two of his three executors were brewers; also his son, admittedly a Mr John Baxter, who inherited the property in April 1898 (long after the Delius visit), was again a hop merchant, living until early 1916. The house remained in Baxter ownership until 1927. A striking resemblance I found, of no real consequence now, was that of Downfield Villa, to Claremont, the old Delius home in Bradford, both dating from virtually the same period, looking similar, and both later to become hotels!

I was left trying to separate the wheat from the chaff, or in this case the wool from the hops.

A conclusion might have been reached had the books of J. Delius & Co. of Bradford been available, say from 1875 onwards. They would have established the destinations at Stroud of some of the wool the firm imported, mainly from Australia. Also (unless Julius cooked his books) they would have shown the commissions paid to their Stroud agent, and if they quoted 'D. Baxter' any doubts would have been dispelled. Having known the district since 1922 and lived in it for the past seventeen years, I now accept that Delius stayed with the agent Baxter up at Rodborough. Perhaps there was an arrangement not to tell the firm? Julius would certainly have resented hotel expenses being used for musical (we hope) nights out in London.... It has been stated that no detail of the Stroud visit remains, because it was 'insignificant'. Actually it was the only period when father and son were, outwardly, on the best of terms. The orders secured by the Frederick-cum-Baxter tie up pleased and convinced Julius that here was his worthy successor. Taken from there, something could have happened as a result of which the glorious and fantastic musical career of the son might have lain undeveloped for ever, under the wool bales in Bradford.

There's little new under the sun, but in any Delius research today there is always the hope of finding some previously unknown or unpublished detail. During the investigation a much later but rewarding local link with Delius was established for me and, I hope, others in this area: although only a girl of 10 years of age in 1881, she was later to be recognised as one of the finest clavichord and harpsichord players in Europe. Delius dedicated in 1919 his "Dance for Harpsichord" to her: by then she had become Mrs. Gordon Woodhouse of Nether Lypiatt Manor, ("The Haunted House") near Stroud. The late C. W. Orr, the distinguished composer who lived in Painswick, recalled visiting Delius at Belsize Park Gardens, London, in 1919 when he was putting the finishing touches to the work, which was first performed in public on a piano, not a harpsichord, by Evelyn Howard-Jones, and subsequently published by Universal Edition.

RUDOLF KEMPE (1910–1976)

A PERSONAL RECOLLECTION by ERIC FENBY

There was no mention of Delius in the many obituaries I saw in the press on the death last year of Rudolf Kempe — scarcely an omission in tributes to one so renowned throughout Europe for his sensitive readings of Mozart, Brahms, Wagner and Strauss. Yet my memory of Kempe is always recalled in association with Delius's music. When first it was decided to celebrate a Delius Centenary Festival in Bradford and I was appointed Artistic Director, my growing concern was Sir Thomas Beecham, then eighty-one and ailing, but confident he would live to a hundred! Would he be able sixteen months later to rehearse and direct the three main concerts of Delius's choral and orchestral music we were planning to give at St. George's Hall? Lord Boothby was to confirm my doubts. Sir Thomas died a few months later in March, 1961, a year before the festival. Dates engaging his orchestra had already been pencilled by Lady Beecham. The problem was — who was to conduct? The festival committee were adamant; a conductor of international rank, no less, should be invited. In honouring Delius as a great musician and Freeman of the City of Bradford, this was also a Civic event for which unheard-of financial support had been voted in the City Council.

My thoughts quite naturally turned to Kempe, Sir Thomas's choice as Associate Conductor of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. I had long admired his lyrical flow: but had he ever conducted Delius? I called on his agent in London and was told that he had once conducted *Brigg Fair* with the Leipzig Radio Orchestra, and had played the oboe in it, too, twenty years earlier! That very morning I had chanced to meet a member of the R.P.O. The orchestra, apparently, had got wind of the festival and were quite dismayed by the prospect of a week of Delius at Bradford! I had asked about Kempe. 'Charming fellow! Knows what he wants! One of the few who can rehearse!'

It was that remark that clinched the matter. Kempe was probed at his home near Munich and promised the scores of the music involved for study in making his decision. He was due to be passing through Heathrow Airport, but passport regulations prevented his landing. We arranged that a taxi bearing the music should be sent out to his plane and this, accordingly, was done. Ten days later he announced his acceptance. Eventually I met him through Lady Beecham and together we devised our plan of action.

Eyebrows were raised at the London press conference when Kempe was named as my choice of conductor. I was censured severely in several letters both privately and publicly. Kempe's arrival in Bradford was eagerly awaited by the two local choral societies. Rather than form a festival choir, they preferred to be responsible for the choral items of one concert each. I recall his first piano rehearsal with the Bradford Old Choral Society — I had taken over their rehearsals myself on the

sudden death of their Chorus Director, the late Herbert Bardgett. Having introduced the Maestro, he was given a somewhat cool reception by a choir still stunned by their tragic loss. He seated himself on a modest chair with the score on his knee quite close to the singers, and speaking in little more than a whisper he began at the chorus-entry in *Sea Drift*, using his hands in minimum gesture. He controlled the choir perfectly in this manner and by the interval they were engrossed. Several then left their places and came to greet him personally despite his obvious aloofness. By the end of *The Song of the High Hills* it was clear they had all measured his quality.

His orchestral rehearsals were a revelation. He rejected all Beecham's markings, just as I had expected; but I had taken the precaution to provide sets of unedited orchestral parts to be distributed the moment he called for rubbers! Again, in the quietest voice, he made his comments to the point, dissecting awkward passages and adding instruments line by line until he secured a balanced texture, and this with unfailing attention from the players.

There was an outburst of small-pox in Bradford at the time, but Rowena and I were more worried about Kempe who appeared to subsist on semolina! He confided that his health was far from good, but when, on the morning of the opening concert, he was rescued from being kidnapped and held to ransom by the Delius Trust for a University students' rag, he took it lightly with no rebuke.

This modest and most reticent of men permitted himself one social diversion during his stay in Bradford. He lunched with the brilliant young Administrator of the Festival, a solicitor, Alan Bottomley, and his charming wife, Susan, who were newly married and in their first home. Susan translated the Verlaine poems of the French songs for the Chamber Concert held in the Bradford Grammer School. Kempe relaxed completely in their company, and regaled us with caustic mimicries of tone-row tomfooleries! Otherwise, he declined all invitations whether private or official, even the Lord Mayor's Banquet attended by the Queen Mother.

Kempe's interpretations were his own, and were more lyrically restrained than those of Beecham. He considered *Eventyr* as the best of the works he was asked to conduct at Bradford, and repeated it in concerts abroad, especially in Italy where it found most favour! There were practical and physical difficulties in the way of achieving a peak performance such as I had hoped to include — a performance of the *Mass of Life* by two committed Nietzscheans, Rudolf Kempe and Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau. Even so, to hear Kempe at Bradford was a privilege shared by members of the orchestra, who afterwards sent me a round-robin to the effect that I could arrange another Delius Festival as soon as I cared, provided it was conducted by Rudolf Kempe! Alas! that can never be!



DERYCK COOKE (1919—1976)

A Personal Tribute by R. O. Wright

The announcement on "Music Weekly" (Radio 3, 31st October 1976) of Deryck Cooke's death on the previous Tuesday came as a great shock to lovers of Delius's music. I personally was shattered. For the past fourteen years I have believed persistently that Deryck Cooke, alone of all the musicological-cum-critical fraternity, defended Delius's music and its reputation from an almost pathological desire to destroy it on the part of other music critics in 1962, Delius's Centenary year.

Cooke's name, as a Delius admirer, first came to my attention in the early 1950s when he provided the perceptive sleeve-notes to two now long-deleted Argo LPs of Delius's songs, part-songs and chamber-works. It was patently obvious that a new voice was emerging in the complex world of musicological research: vibrant, intelligent, a master of luminous prose, and able to communicate directly with the ordinary music-lover. This lucidity reached a prose peak in "The Language of Music", published in 1959. In 1960 his name became known to a larger body of music-lovers through his advocacy for Mahler's music. In that year, Mahler's Centenary, Cooke was the leading musicological advocate of Mahler's music.

At the beginning of 1962 Delius's musical stock was at a depressingly low level. (Elgar was in a similar position in 1957, his Centenary year.) Less than twelve months had elapsed since the death of his greatest interpreter, Sir Thomas Beecham, so we were robbed of his presence at the forthcoming Bradford Centenary Festival, a special centenary celebration planned by the Bradford Corporation some time previously. In the light of all this, what did Deryck Cooke do? He wasted no time, he attacked the loss of reputation, critical indifference and so on with an admirable talk on the Third Programme in January 1962. This was reprinted in "The Listener" for 25th January 1962. The following week's edition contained a further article entitled "Delius, Debussy and Pure Creation". In this Cooke shrewdly observed that Delius was not to "persona ingratissima". As a totally committed Delian I was especially moved by one striking phrase used by Cooke in his Third Programme talk. Talking about Delius's originality he said:

"Hand in hand with this originality goes an *ecstatic sensuous beauty*. Such a remark may seem naïve in an age which has explained beauty away in terms of significance; but in music sensuous beauty

is an irreducible quality — a great quality that some composers have pursued more avidly than others."

With hindsight great courage was needed to state an aesthetic evaluation about an unfashionable composer in the early 1960s. And in a nutshell doesn't the phrase "ecstatic sensuous beauty" reveal the real reason why Delius's music makes such an overwhelming impact on music-lovers aware of his true depth and greatness?

The outcome of all this on my part was a long letter of thanks to Cooke. His reply was grateful and interesting. Apparently he received some twenty listeners' letters:

"As many as I have ever received after broadcasting on any composer, and nearly all extremely intelligent; this seems to me a good sign that Delius's music is still widely appreciated and loved. (I take it that at any time the number of people who actually write to a broadcaster represent only a fraction of those who are interested in his subject.)"

By the time I received Cooke's reply a further article by him had appeared in the April 1962 issue of "Opera". Entitled "Delius' Operatic Masterpiece", it was planned to coincide with the Sadler's Wells production of "A Village Romeo and Juliet". (Delians may recall that this was premièred in Bradford in April 1962 as part of the Centenary Festival, with further performances in London during the same month, followed by a revival in the late autumn.) Subsequent reviews by other critics in "Opera" of this production precipitated a letter-battle, especially between Cooke and John Warrack in the Correspondence columns of "Opera". Warrack's review (as a known anti-Delian) was a characteristic example of snide condescension, which Cooke debunked with brilliant aplomb. In a mid-summer edition of "Opera" Cooke also provided a first-class review of the Third Programme production of "Fennimore and Gerda" conducted by Stanford Robinson. At that time totally unknown and neglected, Cooke was convinced that it was one of Delius's most remarkable works.

In April and May 1962 articles on Delius by John Klein and Andrew Porter appeared in "The Musical Times". These largely arose out of the Bradford Festival. Then in June a series of articles poured from Cooke's pen. Two specialist articles entitled "Delius and Form - A Vindication" appeared in the June and July issues of "The Musical Times". (The second of these is an almost uncanny functional analysis of the Violin Concerto, and the two have been reprinted in Christopher Redwood's "A Delius Companion". Despite Cooke's valiant efforts in

this field, musicologists, music critics and musicians still make ill-founded ignorant, derogatory generalisations about Delius's lack of form or so-called inability to formally develop his musical material! Witness Edward Heath's comments in his new book on music.)

Simultaneously "Musical Opinion" published three articles in their June, July and August issues entitled "The Delius Centenary — A Summing Up". These articles were probably the summation of Cooke's 1962 Delian revaluation (though during December 1962 he delivered an illustrated lecture to the Royal Musical Association entitled "Delius the Unknown". This was published in a limited edition.) In the "Musical Opinion" articles Cooke divided his subject-matter into two parts :

- a) In the first he lined up the various critics (with quotations from their published comments) as semi-Delians and non-Delians, with himself as a kind of pro-Delian referee,
- b) In the second and third he attempted to unravel the "tangled web of critical opinion surrounding the most disturbing of all Delius's works, *A Village Romeo and Juliet*".

Re-reading these articles again recently I was once more struck by their fluent cogency and their uncomplicated directness. Cooke's perspicacity was a quality new in Delian criticism and it was sorely needed in 1962. In the first article he emphasised again the beauty of Delius's music :

"I insist on the importance of this quality, since music which is original without being beautiful in some way or other seems unlikely to survive."

(How true this is of so much music of our own century; indeed most of the music written now is little better than lunatic gibberish!)

The second and third articles were the most serious writing attempted during the Centenary Year to analyse (i) the various and often curious critical reactions to the Sadler's Wells production of "A Village Romeo and Juliet", and (ii) a deeply psychological probing of the opera's meaning and significance. The final paragraph of the last article delineates the Delian experience profoundly :

"So once more I believe we find Delius, as in all his deepest works, putting his finger with painful accuracy on the fundamental malaise of

modern civilised man — his hopeless longing to regain the lost world of nature and innocence. And this is why his music, even today when it is under heavy critical fire from an age which is opposed to his whole style and method still continues to make its subtle and disquieting impact."

As I read these words in August 1962 I knew that here was the musician Delians had been looking for. At last an erudite musicologist who could write a definitive critical study of Delius and his music. So I wrote again to Cooke, asking him if there was a chance of such a work materializing. His reply was interesting though disappointing. His agent, another Delius lover, was particularly anxious that he should. "But", he cautioned, "this will probably not materialize for another five years." Two years later, during the interval at one of Sargent's Albert Hall performances of "A Mass of Life", I managed to snatch a brief word with Cooke when he came into the refreshment room specially reserved for members of the Delius Society. He remembered our correspondence and was as enthusiastic about music he dearly loved, but of his Delius book — not a hope! I realize now that he must have been deep in his performing version of Mahler's 10th Symphony.

The following year, 1965, saw what I believe was the breakthrough in the revaluation of Delius's music with the performance under Sir Charles Groves of the neglected "Requiem" at Liverpool. I am convinced Cooke's efforts in the musicological field helped to bring this about albeit indirectly. So it was good to see him writing about Delius again in "The Listener" of 1st Sept. 1966. This time he boldly entitled his article "Delius — A Great Composer" and discussed Delius's position in the light of the forthcoming performance of "A Mass of Life" at the Proms on 8th Sept., again conducted by Sargent. I hoped then that he might be at work on his long-projected Delius book, but little did I know that he was at work on a vast Wagner project, an incomplete work that his untimely death robbed us of.

I had one final occasion to write to Deryck Cooke. In June 1970 the BBC broadcast their tape of "A Mass of Life" conducted by Sir Charles Groves and recorded at a live performance in the Philharmonic Hall, Liverpool, in January of that year. Cooke had been invited to give a short talk about the work in the interval. I recall that it was a brilliant sunny day; the atmosphere exuded the seductive warmth so marvellously evoked in that work. Cooke's talk was a joy to listen to. I had to write to him again. His reply was grateful and appreciative:

"I am glad you enjoyed my short talk on the Mass — it seemed

like old times to be talking about Delius! I think you are right in saying that there has been an increase in appreciation of Delius on the part of the more perceptive-minded music-lovers; most of it has happened outside London, I suppose, and living in London one tends to see things through London eyes."

I had asked him about the Delius book. His comment now strikes me as poignant:

"I am afraid that my projected Delius book is still a long way off and I am not so sure I shall ever get round to it. At the present time I am still working on my exhaustive book on the "Ring" which is likely to occupy me for another two years or so, and there are other projects as well, including of course a book on Mahler. We shall have to see."

The last piece of Cooke's Delius writing I recollect reading was his review in "The Gramophone" of Meredith Davies' recording of "A Village Romeo and Juliet" in 1973. His delight in this masterpiece had in no way diminished. I hoped that the reappearance of his analysis of the Violin Concerto in "A Delius Companion" might have been at long last the prelude to his long-awaited book. But his sad, tragic loss at the age of 57 has robbed us of this and his sterling, affable personality. He was a big, generous man in every way and we cannot afford to lose such people in our ruthless modern world.

An additional note by Eric Fenby:

The appreciative obituaries of Deryck Cooke quite rightly acclaimed his achievement as an undoubted authority on the music of Wagner, Bruckner and Mahler. I should like to add a few words of tribute regarding the efforts of this modest man on behalf of the music of Delius.

Though by comparison, regrettably, his writings on Delius were slight in bulk, his insight, scholarship and flair were such it was clear he had something vital to say with obvious commitment, Conviction and clarity; above all, that he loved the music.

It is tragic that one so gifted as he should be taken before he had finished the task he had set himself in his study of Wagner. It is sad, too, for many of us, there can never be more from Deryck on Delius.

**DELIUS SOCIETY MEETING
AT HOLBORN PUBLIC LIBRARY, 23rd SEPTEMBER, 1976.**

On an evening when the Society welcomed at Holborn Public Library, the return of one of its dearest members, Estelle Palmley after her recent illness, a few new members, and the news of Malcolm Walker's response to recent surgery, it was Christopher Redwood who claimed — and quite rightly so — the greatest portion of our praise.

The success of a talk such as he undertook to deliver at short notice — Charles Kennedy Scott in the context of the British Choral Tradition, with emphasis on Delius — can at times be based less on the issues it resolves than those it raises. I believe that the evening of September 23rd produced such an event.

Among the issues I considered resolved is that the common depth of interest in this aspect of Delius's work makes the names of both Scott and Redwood quite important points of reference in any future thoughts on the subject.

Among those raised is the great responsibility — implied in Delius's later choral scores, placed on corporate singers, a high proportion of whom are, by tradition, amateur — to display such an advanced harmonic vocabulary as was his at peak development; one of Scott's associated adjectives was "RUTHLESS", but what other approach could emancipate collective singing from making mainly joyful utterances to a role which could reveal precisely the depth of creative harmonic concentration?

The rewards of 'writing down' to singers are well known and include popularity, pursued by composers of some standing, but could it not be said — in spite of the speaker's muted apology for them — that the two early part songs heard from a tape recording, by their comparison with the two which mothered the "Aquarelles", demonstrated to what extent we would be deprived had Delius been less reluctant to compromise his unique standards of harmonic thought?

After acknowledging Stephen Lloyd's invaluable contribution to the programme, we now await the development of this subject.

Robert Rockcliffe

The production of "Fennimore and Gerda" which Frank Corsaro was hoping to mount this year in Houston, Texas, has unfortunately been cancelled. Mr. Corsaro tells us, however, that he is determined to produce the opera elsewhere. He has also had a number of offers to mount his production of "A Village Romeo and Juliet" in Europe, including one enquiry from the United Kingdom.

PIANO RECITAL BY ROBERT THRELFALL.

Midlands Branch 13th. November 1976

Holborn 25th. November 1976.

Robert entitled his recital "A sequence of piano pieces by Delius and some of his friends and contemporaries". Had the title been confined to Delius and his friends it might have been a daunting task to compile a suitable programme, as neither Delius nor the majority of his friends showed their gifts to their best advantage in their piano music.

An exception must, of course, be made in the case of Grieg with whose music the recital commenced. Although it has long been well known that "In Ola Dale" Op. 66 No. 14 contains the tune that Delius used in the second section of the theme of "On hearing the first Cuckoo in Spring" I suspect that few had imagined that the first part of the tune is anticipated in Greig's "Students' Serenade" Op. 73 No. 6 This fact, apparently first observed by Gerald Abraham, and other fascinating details emerged from Robert's commentary on the various items.

Among the Delius pieces Robert included his own arrangement of "Sleigh Ride". It seems that this was originally composed as a piano piece but that the original version has been lost.

His technique was clearly demonstrated in Grainger's Lullaby from "Tribute to Foster" in which the repeated notes are a real test of a player's ability.

Warlock's Folk Song Preludes, Sibelius's Sonatina and Elgar's "In Smyrna", although interesting to hear, all support the view that their music was better expressed elsewhere than at the piano. On the other hand, Richard Strauss's "Träumerei" was pianistic and, although slight, attractive.

Busoni and Bartok are both properly included among Delius's friends although it is doubtful whether the music of either composer appealed to Delius. Certainly it is difficult to imagine Delius sitting through Allegro Barbaro without displaying impatience, and, as he appears never to have forgiven Busoni for an appalling performance of "Paris", it seems unlikely that he would have appreciated Turandot's Frauengemach notwithstanding its inclusion of "Greensleeves". Ravel was another matter for Eric Fenby tells us that Delius possessed a score of "Daphnis and Chloe" and the Prelude Robert played would be unlikely to give offence.

Balfour Gardiner was represented by some of his best known pieces, Nos. 1, 4 & 5 from "Five Pieces". O'Neill's "Carillon" showed that his music deserves to be heard from time to time.

The remaining items fell into the "contemporaries" category. Robert admitted that Cyril Scott's only claim for inclusion was that he once found Delius accommodation in London, whereas not even so tenuous a connection could be claimed for John Ireland and Chabrier. Never-

theless Ireland's "The Darkened Valley" and "Fire of Spring" both reveal his fine understanding of the piano and Chabrier's Scherzo-Valse was an effervescent finale.

When the recital was given in Nottingham one member remarked that the Delius pieces ("Dance for Harpsichord," Piano pieces 1, 2, and 3, Three Preludes and Toccata) seemed better works than they are usually considered. This may have been partly due to the context in which they were performed, but I think it was primarily due to the sensitive manner of Robert's performance; I found his playing of the "Dance for Harpsichord" particularly good and it certainly emerged a better piece than I had hitherto thought.

The whole recital was an example of the meticulous care which Robert brings to everything he undertakes for the society, each item being carefully chosen for its place in the programme. The Society have good reason to be grateful to have such a talented and knowledgeable member prepared to give his services so willingly for our pleasure.

R. B. Kitching.

Forthcoming Events

22nd January at 8 p.m.

Concert in the Royal Naval Chapel, Greenwich:

Concerto Grosso, Op. 3 No. 4 — Handel

Summer Night on the River — Delius

On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring — Delius

Les Illuminations — Britten

Concert Arias — Mozart

Symphony No. 41 in C — Mozart

Peter Pears (tenor), Christopher Seaman (conductor), Northern Sinfonia.

Tickets £2.50, £2.00, £1.50, 90p available from 25 Woolwich New

Road, London SE18, telephone: 01-854 5250. Cheques should be made payable to Greenwich Entertainment Service.

January 28th at 7.30 p.m.

Delius Society meeting. Mrs. Dawn Redwood: "Hassan", Delius and Flecker. Holborn Public Libraries, Theobalds Road, London WC1.

8, 9, 10th February, at 7.45 p.m.

Divertimento in D (K.136) — Mozart

Brigg Fair — Delius

Violin Concerto — Mendelssohn

Death and Transfiguration — Strauss

Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Conductor: Sir Charles Groves. Soloist: Mayumi Fujikawa. The Philharmonic Hall, Liverpool.

February 20th, at 7.30 p.m.

"A Mass of Life". The Hallé Choir and Orchestra, with Margaret Curphey (soprano), Alfreda Hodgson (contralto), Richard Lewis tenor) and Brian Rayner Cook (baritone), conducted by Maurice Handford. The Free Trade Hall, Manchester.

Tickets 80p — £3.00. (5% discount normally available for parties of 10 or more persons; 10% discount for 25 or more.)

17th March at 7.30 p.m.

Symphony No. 6 in D ("Le Matin") — Haydn.

"Sea Drift" — Delius.

Symphony No. 8 in G — Dvorak.

The Hallé Choir and Orchestra with Alan Opie (baritone), conducted by John Pritchard.

Free Trade Hall, Manchester. Tickets as February 20th.

Saturday 2nd April 1977 at 7.45 p.m.

Overture The Gipsy Baron — J. Strauss II

Double Horn Concerto — Haydn

Variations on a Nursery Theme — Dohnanyi

I'm Seventeen come Sunday — Grainger

Folk Songs for Four Seasons — Vaughan Williams

Brigg Fair — Delius

Proteus Choir, Guildford Philharmonic Orchestra, Conductor Vernon Handley. Malcolm Binns (piano). Peter and David Clack (Horns).

The Civic Hall, Guildford.

6th April at 7.30 p.m.

Delius Society meeting at Holborn Public Libraries, Theobalds Road, London WC1. Programme to be presented by Lyndon Jenkins, who talks about Delius on record.

26th May at 8.15 p.m.

Eric Fenby speaks on Delius at Limpsfield.

28th May.

Delius Society AGM and Dinner.

6th June at 7.30 p.m.

Elgar Society meeting at the British Institute of Recorded Sound, 29 Exhibition Road, London SW7. Eric Fenby talks on "Delius and Elgar".

3rd July at 7.30 p.m.

"Brigg Fair" — Delius

Concerto for 'Cello and Orchestra — Elgar.

"The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse" — Wilfred Josephs.

Suite: "The Planets" — Holst.

Zara Nelsova ('Cello) with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Sir Charles Groves.



